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FOR EUR/NB KATHERINE GARRY

E.O. 12958

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SUBJECT: ESTONIA: RUSSIA WILL NOT RECOGNIZE AN INDEPENDENT
ABKHAZIA

REF: STATE 14840

¶1. (SBU) On February 14, Poloff met with Simmu Tiik, Director General of the 3rd Political Department (Russia) and Toomas Tirs, Georgia Desk Officer, at the Estonian MFA to discuss reftel points. Tiik said, based on recent statements by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, he does not think Russia will recognize Abkhazia in the short term. Tiik hypothesized that the GOR might instead encourage Abkhazia to declare independence and then Russia would take certain steps toward de facto recognition. In fact, Tiik pointed out, Russia already has extended diplomatic protocol to Abkhazian officials visiting Moscow and applies different border regimes to Abkhazia and the rest of Georgia. Enhancing these existing policies would constitute a de facto recognition.

PHILLIPS